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REVIEW OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERIM SECRETARIAT, INCLUDING REVIEW OF EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

Note by the Executive Secretary

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. At its seventh session, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change took note of information provided by the interim secretariat in document A/AC.237/28 on administrative and budgetary matters, extrabudgetary funds and a number of current secretariat activities. The purpose of the present note is to bring up to date the information provided on these subjects. Two of the topics covered by the previous report are dealt with in separate documents before the Committee at its eighth session, namely, a project for an information exchange system in support of Article 12.7 of the Convention and information on activities of United Nations entities and other relevant international organizations (A/AC.237/38 and A/AC.237/39 and Add.1, respectively).

II. ADMINISTRATIVE AND BUDGETARY MATTERS

A. Administrative matters

2. In consequence of the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat, the interim secretariat has been incorporated in the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development (DPCSD).

3. Discussions are currently under way between the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Swiss authorities regarding the offer of the latter to expand the office space available to the United Nations by providing office premises in the building known as the Geneva Executive Centre (GEC). This offer covers accommodation for the interim secretariat and other Geneva-based elements of DPCSD, notably the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for an International Convention to Combat Desertification (INC-D). Various units of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) have already moved into the same building. This common location would give rise to opportunities for cost-effective collaboration in work on climate change.

4. The timing of the move of the interim secretariat to its new premises depends on the outcome of the above-mentioned discussions. November 1993 seems to be a likely date.

B. Staffing

1. Current staffing

5. At its seventh session, the Committee indicated three areas of work in which the interim secretariat needed to be strengthened in order to support the Committee's work programme, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/195, para.11 (A/AC.237/31, para. 67):

> "(a) Communication and review of information under the Convention;
> (b) Implementation of Article 11 and Article 21, paragraph 3, of the Convention, related to the financial mechanism;
> (c) Promotion of capacity-building in accordance with the Convention and General Assembly resolution 47/195."

6. In consequence of the above, temporary arrangements have been made within the framework of DPCSD for the services of a Principal Officer (D.1) to be available to the interim secretariat on a part-time basis. This officer is responsible for work on financial and economic questions in support of both the Commission on Sustainable Development and Working Group II of the Committee. This temporary strengthening of the interim secretariat's capacity corresponds to one of the priority areas indicated by the Committee. Other temporary support arrangements within DPCSD are being explored; they may also relate to other areas of work. It has not yet been possible to effect any definitive transfer of professional staff or vacant posts to the interim secretariat from other parts of DPCSD. However, there is a prospect of the redeployment of a post to accommodate the position of Scientific Assistant that is currently financed bilaterally until the end of this year (see para. 8 below). These matters are being pursued.

7. The core staff of the interim secretariat, funded by the United Nations programme budget, remains as it was at the start of the negotiating process. The staffing provisions of the "maintenance budget", approved by the General Assembly for the Committee's secretariat until 31 March 1993, were extended to the end of this year. These provisions have been converted from general temporary assistance to established posts in the United Nations regular budget as follows: 1 D.2; 1 D.1; 1 P.4; 1 P.3; 1 P.2; and 4 general service staff. This conversion was effected through the redeployment of existing posts, in the context of the restructuring of the United Nations Secretariat.

8. Changes in staffing financed from sources outside the United Nations programme budget are as follows: UNEP has resumed the secondment of a legal adviser (P.4) from 1 July 1993 for a period of two years; the Netherlands has provided bilateral finance for one L.6 position (Principal Scientific Officer) from 1 April 1993 - 30 June 1996; and one L.5 position will be financed out of the trust fund for the negotiating process, initially for one year from 1 September 1993. Bilateral support by France for an L.2 position (scientific assistant), which was to have ended in June 1993, has been extended to 31 December 1993.

9. Within the context of DPCSD, a legal assistant (L.2), funded bilaterally by Norway and Sweden, has been loaned by the interim secretariat to the secretariat of INC-D. This loan of services accounts for some seven work-months in 1993. This reduction in the secretariat's current capacity was considered justified in view of the drop in demand for legal services and the needs of the INC-D secretariat. Finance for this post expires in January 1994.

10. The following table shows the staffing situation of the interim secretariat at 1 August 1993.

Full-time staff resources of the interim secretariat at 1 August 1993, classified by level and source of funding

	Programme budget provision to 31.12.1993	Other sources		Total
D.2	1	-		1
D.1/L.6	1	2	WMO; bilateral (Netherlands to 30.06.96)	3
P.5/L.5	-	1	Trust fund (from 01.09.93 to 31.08.94)	1
P.4	1	1	UNEP (from 01.07.93 to 30.06.95)	2
P.3	1	-		1
P.2/L.2	1	2	Bilateral: (France to 31.12.93; Norway/Sweden to 13.01.94)	3
Total	5	6		11
GS	4	5	WMO - 2; trust fund/overheads - 3	9

11. The table shows that the United Nations programme budget provides less than half of the staff of the interim secretariat. Further, two of the six professional positions financed from other sources are about to expire, while one is only secure for one year.

2. Staffing needs in 1994-1995

12. The core staff resources of the interim secretariat for the next two years will be determined in the United Nations programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 to be approved by the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session. The proposed programme budget is expected to provide for the maintenance of existing staff in the professional category (5 posts) and for an increase by two posts for staff in the general service category (6 posts). This provision would be made in the framework of a proposal for limited growth of the overall regular budget of the United Nations.

13. The Executive Secretary has estimated that significant additional staff resources would be needed to support the work of the Committee and, in particular, that of the first session of the Conference of the Parties (COP I). Current preparatory work by the interim secretariat related to the communication and review process (support for Working Group I) is being handled by professional staff not funded by the United Nations regular budget. Additional resources are needed to maintain this capacity. The servicing of COP I could involve a further increase in the interim secretariat's workload, because of the shift from supporting preparatory discussions in the Committee to providing technical support to the actual process of communication and review of information under the Convention. This need may be better assessed in the light of the Committee's consideration of item 2 (c) of its agenda. It could be substantially greater than that arising from current preparatory work. There is also a need to allocate staff resources to the promotion of capacity-building activities and technical cooperation in support of the timely implementation of the Convention by developing and other countries.

14. It is assumed that additional support for work on the financial mechanism, and possibly for other areas of work, will continue to be provided through collaborative arrangements within DPCSD (see para. 6 above). This assumption will have to be kept under review. Estimates of staff requirements in work months for the two other priority areas for 1994-1995 are shown below. The estimates for supporting the communication and review process will need to be revised upwards, if the workload increases significantly to meet the needs of COP I.

(a) Communication and review process

	Work months	Available (source of funds)	Work months	Requested	Total
D.1/L.6	24	Coordinator (bilateral)			24
P/L.5	8	senior adviser (trust fund)	16		24
P/L.4	-		24	information systems officer	24
P/L.3-2	-		24	scientific officer; (to absorb current L.2)	24
GS	24	secretary (regular budget)	72	research assistant; documentalist/database operator; secretary	96

(b) Capacity building

	Work months	Available (source of funds)	Work months	Requested	Total
D.1/L.6	-		24	Coordinator, technical cooperation	24
P/L.5	-		24	project manager - CLIMEX [1/]	24
P/L.4	-		-		-
P/L.3-2	-		24	programme assistant, CLIMEX [1/]	24
GS	24	(communication assistant - trust fund	48	research assistant, secretary	72

15. Other staffing needs for the forthcoming biennium are related to overall programme management and administration, as well as to activities to raise public awareness and to communicate information to the media and non-governmental organizations. These needs are for a communication officer (P.3) and two clerical staff.

16. The estimated cost of the additional staff resources indicated in paragraphs 14 and 15 above is $US 3.5 million for 1994-1995. Given the present situation as regards the United Nations programme budget for the biennium, these resources will be sought from extrabudgetary sources, including contributions to the trust fund. As stated above (para. 6), the present scope for redeployment of staff from within DPCSD appears to be limited to one professional post.

17. Meanwhile, the Executive Secretary would like to encourage member States in a position to do so to consider making staff resources available to the secretariat bilaterally. The most flexible form of support would be funding for professional positions, without secondment of incumbents for these posts. This would enable the secretariat to fill these positions with staff from countries other than those providing funds, particularly from developing countries. There has been one instance of such support so far, namely, the funding by Norway and Sweden of one L.2 position for two years. Such arrangements would be a way for the secretariat to supplement its skills in such areas as scientific and economic analysis and management of information systems.

C. Non-staff costs

18. Resources for non-staff costs are also being requested through the forthcoming United Nations programme budget. As in the past, the trust fund for the negotiating process is expected to supplement this. Until resources are allocated to the interim secretariat through the programme budget, it is not possible to estimate precisely the need for funding of these costs through the trust fund in 1994-1995. One order of magnitude that may be indicated is the difference between the estimated total needs for non-staff costs and the amounts that would be available if current provisions under the United Nations programme budget are maintained. This order of magnitude emerges from the following table (all figures to nearest thousand $US). The remarks give some elements of explanation but are not an exhaustive justification.

	Current provisions (adjusted for 1994-1995)	Additional needed	Remarks
General temporary assistance	0	100	Extra secretarial support for INC and COP
Consultants	101	200	Total: 30 work-months plus travel, DSA
Overtime	10	10	
Expert groups	72	130	Total: four ad hoc groups
Staff travel	315	65	INC session outside Geneva
Public information materials	11	170	Joint projects with IUCC
General operating expenses*	96	125	
Supplies and materials	80	20	
Furniture and equipment	30	130	Move to GEC
Contingencies	0	50	
	715	1,000	

* Rental and maintenance of equipment, communications, miscellaneous services

III. STATUS OF EXTRABUDGETARY FUNDS

19. The following information on the two extrabudgetary funds established by General Assembly resolution 45/212 supplements that provided to the Committee at its sixth and seventh sessions (A/AC.237/23 and A/AC.237/28, respectively). The annexes to this note show the current state of pledges and receipts for the two funds. The total amounts that have been made available since the establishment of the funds are as follows:

Special voluntary fund
(General Assembly resolution 45/212, para. 10) - $US 3,631,000

Trust fund for the negotiating process
(General Assembly resolution 45/212, para. 20) - $US 1,228,550

A. Special voluntary fund (General Assembly resolution 45/212, para. 10)

20. Under the special voluntary fund for financing participation in the Committee's sessions, funding is currently being offered to 115 developing countries and to 19 countries with economies in transition. A number of contributors to this fund have indicated that their contributions may be used in part for the latter category of countries; others have earmarked additional finance for these countries. [2]/ In selecting countries with economies in transition for funding, the secretariat has given priority to those countries that have signed or acceded to the Convention.

21. The secretariat intends to review the current criteria of eligibility for access to the special voluntary fund before the ninth session of the Committee. Since the period for the signature of the Convention has closed, consideration will be given to limiting eligibility of developing and other countries to those that have signed or acceded to the Convention. Within this broad criterion, the application of the ceiling of US$ 3,500 GDP per head will be reviewed in the light of the latest statistics.

22. The commitments from the special voluntary fund for financing participation of developing countries in the Committee's sessions up to the seventh session, including provision for programme support costs at 13 per cent, amount to an estimated US$ 3 million. The costs of financing participation by these countries in the eighth session could be as much as US$ 600,000. This is covered by the current state of the fund. It is anticipated that a further US$ 1.2 million will be needed for this fund in 1993-1994 to cover participation by developing countries in the ninth and tenth sessions. Contributions by the end of November 1993 are requested to cover the funding of participation in the ninth session, scheduled for February 1994.

23. An additional amount of US$ 200,000 will be needed to fund participation by countries with economies in transition in the ninth and tenth sessions.

B. Trust fund for the negotiating process (General Assembly resolution 45/212, para. 20)

24. The approximate $US 1.2 million received in the trust fund for the negotiating process since 1991 has been allotted for use as follows:

	US dollars
Allotted for expenditure:	726,800
Retained for overheads and operating reserve:	277,200
Not yet allotted:	196,000

Objects of expenditure

Temporary assistance	447,500
Consultants	90,000
Travel of staff (including to INC/FCCC sessions away from Geneva)	129,300
Office equipment	35,000
Other	25,000

25. The estimate of total possible needs for this fund in 1994-1995, derived from paragraphs 16 and 18 above, is US$ 4.5 million.

IV. CURRENT ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERIM SECRETARIAT

A. Information and training programme

26. At its seventh session, the Committee received further information on this programme, which has been developed by the interim secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), in collaboration with the secretariats of the Global Environment Facility (GEF), Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Committee expressed its appreciation to all partners involved with the interim secretariat in the elaboration, development and financing of the project, and looked forward to receiving information at its eighth session on the implementation of the project (A/AC.237/31, paras. 57-58).

27. The pilot phase will be guided by a Steering Group assembling all the entities mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The pilot phase aims to contribute to the development of a comprehensive training package that can assist countries in policy development and capacity building for the effective implementation of the Convention. It will include training workshops and related activities in three countries in different regions. These activities will seek to catalyze national capacities and facilitate linkages to sources of external support for national activities related to the Convention. National institutions will be involved at all stages.

28. A proposal for the one-year pilot phase was submitted for financing under the GEF and was revised according to comments and recommendations of the GEF Scientific and Technical Advisory Panel (STAP) and the GEF Implementation Committee. These reviews recognized the importance of this type of capacity-building project for the implementation of the Convention. The project was part of the fifth programme tranche that was endorsed by the GEF Participants' Meeting in Beijing in May 1993. It will be implemented as a UNDP technical assistance project. The project team is currently drafting the standard UNDP project document and the pilot phase is expected to begin in September or October 1993, following approval of the project document.

29. Pending approval of the project, the interim secretariat is contacting a number of governments to ascertain their interest and availability to participate in the pilot phase. By the ninth session of the Committee, the interim secretariat should be able to report on the development of work with the participating Governments and local institutions and the details of the workshops and related activities.

B. Promotion of public awareness

30. The interim secretariat continues to collaborate with the UNEP/WMO Information Unit on Climate Change (IUCC) on a variety of public information activities related to the Convention. These activities are designed to raise awareness about the Convention and its implications for individuals, communities, businesses and policy-makers. Some of the activities also focus on informing a wide audience about the Convention process.

1. United Nations Climate Change Newsletter

31. Published jointly by the interim secretariat, the IUCC and the IPCC secretariat, this quarterly newsletter reports on the climate change-related activities of the United Nations system. Its purpose is to make these activities and their links to the Convention process more transparent and to provide information of general interest. The first issue will be available at the Committee's session.

2. Convention booklet

32. To disseminate the Convention as widely as possible, a kit containing the Convention text in booklet form and an explanatory leaflet will be published in English, French and Spanish in August/September 1993. A second phase of this project will produce the kit in the three remaining United Nations languages by early 1994, if funds are available.

3. Media campaign

33. A series of media events tied to important moments in the Convention process has been planned, leading up to COP I. The first press conference "One year after Rio" took place in June and received international coverage. Press coverage of Committee sessions is being promoted. The 50th ratification of the Convention and its entry into force will be suitably marked.

4. Information and training materials

34. A series of specialized "fact sheets" and a "popular guide" on the Convention will be produced in the coming months. Overhead transparencies have already been produced and fund-raising efforts for two video projects are being initiated. A joint documentation centre and computer links are planned for later in the year or early in 1994.

35. In a collaborative effort, the interim secretariat, with the assistance of the IUCC, will produce, jointly with the Industry and Environment Programme Activity Centre of UNEP, an issue of the periodical bulletin "Industry and Environment" on the relevant aspects of climate change and industry. This issue is planned for mid-1994.

C. Development of data-processing capacities

36. With a grant of US$ 210,000 from Switzerland, through the trust fund, the interim secretariat is undertaking activities to improve its capacities for dataprocessing and communications with Governments. The objective is to develop facilities for internal and external access to databases, electronic mail and other data-processing and communications facilities. Initially two areas are emphasized: the installation of a Local Area Network (LAN) and the development of databases.

sharing, document tracking, and central archiving of documents. Plans are being developed to extend the facilities of the LAN to connect it to the Geneva-wide Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) that is now being put in place by the United Nations, as well as to other relevant communications networks. This will take place after the move of the interim secretariat to its new offices at the GEC during the last quarter of 1993. At that time it will also be possible to increase collaboration and strengthen common services with the other Geneva-based elements of DPCSD, notably the INC-D.

38. Considerable work has been undertaken in processing the information that is available at the secretariat. The bibliographical and periodicals databases (CLIMA and CCPER) are continuously being updated (see document A/AC.237/Misc.24/Add.1). Plans are being developed to convert these into more user-friendly software. A set of databases have also been developed which contain institutional and individual contact information, as well as information concerning country activities on climate change. The databases are linked by a number of common fields. Data entry has begun. One by-product is that the list of participants and the badges at this session of the INC/FCCC will be generated using the new system.

39. Basic electronic mail facilities are operational. The interim secretariat can now be reached via electronic mail (for the time being at the Internet addresses INCFCC@itu.arcom.ch. or unced@igc.apc.org), and all INC/FCCC documents are available on the electronic bulletin board "inc.climate" on all Association for Progressive Communications (APC) networks, worldwide.

40. While these data-processing and electronic communications facilities provide general support to day-to-day work, specific activities may be developed that will be based on these facilities. The CLIMEX project (see A/AC.237/38) is expected to use the database systems, as well as the electronic communications facilities, for its regular functioning.

41. The overall objective is to ensure that by the time of COP I, an information system that could cover the needs of the COP and its secretariat should be in place. The interim secretariat has started to develop elements of an information strategy to this end. The Committee will be kept informed of progress in this area, including as to how the COP and participating delegations will be able to make use of the information system.

Notes

1/ See document A/AC.237/38; UNEP may be able to provide a share of the cost.

2/ Switzerland: $US117,000; Commission of European Communities: $US30,000.

Annex 1

CONTRIBUTIONS TO SUPPORT THE PARTICIPATION OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Status of contributions as of 4 August 1993[a/]

A. Contributions to Special Voluntary Fund

(General Assembly resolution 45/212, paragraph 10)

Contributor	Pledge (outstanding)	Receipt (or in pipeline)[b/]
Austria (x3)		$US 40,000 8 August 1991 $US 25,000 28 August 1991 $US 24,985 7 April 1993
Canada (x5)		$US 30,085.16 29 March 1991 $US 27,353 12 April 1993 $US 82,250.00 $US 31,496.06 28 April 1993 $US 54,687.50 21 July 1993
Commission of the European Communities[c/] (x3)	75,000 ECUs ($US90,000)	$US 63,580 27 August 1992 ($US 60,000)
Denmark (x4)		$US 100,000 23 April 1991 $US 50,000 4 March 1992 $US 74,985 24 November 1992 $US 79,985 2 March 1993

[a/] Figures in brackets are approximate equivalents in United States dollars.

[b/] Where the date of receipt is not given, payment has been reported but the secretariat has not yet received a copy of the receipt issued by United Nations Headquarters.

[c/] See also para. 20 of this document.

B. Other contributions made to or in consultation with the secretariat

Contributor	Pledge (outstanding)	Receipt (or in pipeline)[b/]
Japan		$US200,000[d/]
United Nations Development Programme		($US100,000)[e/]
TOTAL		**$US300,000**

d/ Contributions paid from the Japanese Trust Fund for International Cooperation for Development to finance travel to and participation in pre-session seminars and training activities.

e/ Offered to participants from 20 developing countries selected by UNDP.

Annex 2

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE TRUST FUND FOR THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS

(General Assembly resolution 45/212, paragraph 20)

Status of contributions as of 4 August 1993

Contributor	Pledge (outstanding)	Receipt (or in pipeline)[b/]
Australia		$US 16,945 24 May 1993
Canada		$US31,496.06 28 April 1993
Commission of the European Communities (X3)	50,000 ECU ($US60,000)	$US 63,580 27 August 1992 ($US60,000)
France		$US 18,065.21 27 January 1992
Japan (x2)	$US 27,224	$US 85,961 26 February 1993
Netherlands		$US 31,018.04 13 July 1992
Norway (x2)		$US 15,341.40 30 April 1992 $US 15,309.50 1 December 1992
Switzerland (x3)		$US 34,734.28 5 February 1992 $US149,985.00 14 July 1992 US$210,000[c/] 28 January 1993
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (x3)	£40,000 (US$60,000)	$US 52,629.53 $US 46,266.41 27 January 1993
United States of America		US$250,000 27 April 1993
Totals	**($US147,224)**	**$US1,081,331.43**
TOTAL FINANCE THROUGH TRUST FUND approx.		**($US1,228,550.00)**

a/ Figures in brackets are approximate equivalents in United States dollars.

b/ Where the date of receipt is not given, payment has been reported but the secretariat has not yet received a copy of the receipt issued by United Nations Headquarters.

c/ See para. 36 to this document.